

National "Get into Your Sanctuary" Celebration – June 25th - 26th, 2016



Photo: Greg McFall, NOAA

Who We Are

The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries serves as the trustee for a network of underwater parks encompassing more than 170,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters. The network includes a system of 13 national marine sanctuaries and two marine national monuments.

Within these protected waters, majestic whales feed and migrate, coral reefs flourish and shipwrecks reveal secrets of our maritime history. And it's YOURS to enjoy, because the vast majority of national marine sanctuary waters are open to recreational fishing, birding, wildlife watching, diving, surfing, kayaking and many more activities that are compatible with conservation goals.

How to get involved...Plan a visit so you can get into the waters of *your* sanctuary!

- Take photos (and leave only bubbles!) while enjoying your favorite sanctuary experiences.
- Share with an **#ILoveMySanctuary**
- Enter your best shots in the **photo contest**: June 1-July 15.
- min. 1200 pixels wide
Submit to earthisblue@noaa.gov
<http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/earthisblue/photo-contest.html>

You're invited!

As a travel destination, few places on the planet can compete with the diversity of the National Marine Sanctuary System. So, we're going to celebrate ALL of them at the same time, and we want YOU to join us!

The weekend of June 25-26th marks our second National "Get into Your Sanctuary" celebration, when sites across the system will be hosting concurrent public events to help you personally experience, enjoy and protect these special places.

Check our website and social media channels for updates throughout the month of June, and don't forget to enter the *Get into Your Sanctuary* photo contest! Please help us spread the word by sharing your favorite sanctuary stories with the hashtag, **#ILoveMySanctuary**.

Gray's Reef Comes to Your Local Boat Ramp

What: Witness the unveiling of our new signs and learn about the fun times that await you in the waters of Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary. Then stick around to enjoy Rodney J. Hall boat ramp's pavilion, bait shop, kayak rental options and barbeque pits.

Want to explore Gray's Reef up close? The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation is sponsoring a "Get into Your Sanctuary" dive trip out to Gray's Reef. Contact the South Georgia Charter Company at (912) 882-7078 for more information.

When: Saturday, June 25th, 10:00 a.m. - Noon

Where: Rodney J. Hall Boat Ramp and other ramps across coastal Georgia.



NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY SYSTEM



About *Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary*

Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary protects a vibrant hard-bottom area off the Georgia coast. The reef's scattered rocky outcroppings and ledges provide homes for an abundance of marine life. Crabs, lobsters, soft corals, sponges, sea stars and other organisms form a dense carpet of living creatures, covering the nooks and crannies of Gray's Reef and giving it the name "live bottom." The reef attracts more than 200 species of fish, including black sea bass, snappers, groupers and mackerels. Loggerhead sea turtles, a threatened species, forage and rest year-round at Gray's Reef, and the reef is within the only known winter calving ground for the highly endangered North Atlantic right whale. The 22 square mile sanctuary is the only protected natural reef and one of a few natural marine protected areas in the Atlantic Ocean between Cape Hatteras, North Carolina and Cape Canaveral, Florida.

Gray's Reef also attracts people: recreational boaters, anglers and divers are among the sanctuary's user groups. However, given the sanctuary's remote location 16 miles east of Sapelo Island, Georgia, most people experience Gray's Reef through pictures or videos showing some of its colorful fish and benthic organisms.

No need to get your feet wet; Gray's Reef has exhibit partnerships with the Georgia Aquarium, the Tybee Island Marine Science Center, the Fernbank Museum of Natural History, Georgia Southern University and South Carolina Aquarium, among others.

Find Us

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